



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor

March 11, 2006

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA:

Eight weeks ago, I began this first General Assembly session of my term with a pledge to reform Virginia's transportation system: to protect the taxpayer dollars we spend for transportation, to change the way we plan so that people and goods can move more freely without increasing sprawl, to invest in overdue repairs to roads and bridges, and to provide new infrastructure for roads, rails and public transit.

While there is still important work to do, I am pleased by the many areas in which we have found agreement.

We are all committed to protecting transportation dollars for transportation. During my term, I will prevent raids on transportation dollars with my line-item veto authority. I will never sign a bill increasing a transportation revenue source without a condition that the revenue would sunset if used for non-transportation purposes. This year, the Senate approved budget language to lock up the transportation trust fund, and I hope to see that language approved in the final budget bill. We continue to work together to craft a permanent lock on the transportation trust fund through a constitutional amendment. The Senate approved such an amendment this year for the first time, and I applaud that commitment to fiscal integrity. The House, which has long supported such an amendment, declined to do so this year. I am confident that we will have such an amendment approved by Virginia citizens during my term as Governor.

We are all committed to getting the most for our transportation dollars. You passed a number of important reforms of the Virginia Department of Transportation this year, many of them suggested by the House of Delegates. I have also begun a professional, bipartisan search process for the next Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Transportation, who will be an agent of change in that Department. Further, I announced an initiative to set measurable performance standards—beyond just on-time and on-budget—that would allow us to compare the effectiveness of proposed transportation projects and choose the transportation investments that move people and goods in the most efficient way.

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We also made unprecedented progress on better linking land use and transportation planning. You approved important pieces of legislation, requiring traffic impact statements and allowing transfer of development rights, that begin to better connect roads and development, and a number of my proposed uses of new transportation investments reflect a new way of doing business in transportation planning. I will continue to pursue legislative and administrative actions throughout my term that help us meet the goals of both providing an effective transportation network and protecting the character of our homes and communities.

We are also in agreement that a strong transportation system requires new investments. I proposed a series of measures that would have provided significant statewide funds for transportation without a general tax increase, and without harming our existing general fund commitments to education, health care, and public safety. While the Senate proposed different sources of revenue for transportation, it shares my commitment to the principle of a reliable, sustainable, statewide solution that does not take money from schools, health care, public safety, or the environment. While the House has identified the need for new investments, it unfortunately has chosen to use general fund dollars putting transportation in direct competition with education for scarce funds.

While we have accomplished much together, Virginia needs a transportation solution, and local governments, colleges, and a host of other important service providers need a state budget. I am disappointed that for the third time in six years, you will adjourn sine die without completing an appropriations bill. Accordingly, I have issued a call for a special session of the General Assembly to begin Monday, March 27 for you to complete your work on transportation and the Budget Bills. I have been assured that the budget conferees will continue to meet in the interim, and I am hopeful that we can bring this special session to a swift conclusion.

This has been an exciting and productive first two months of my administration, with many bipartisan legislative accomplishments. We have worked to strengthen the economies of our rural communities, increase educational opportunity and accountability, provide more information to homeowners' taxpayers, help faith-based organizations work with government, and make our communities safer.

I look forward to continuing to work with you over the next four years.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor of Virginia